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those of the submerged, in which from the nature of things are bred, not merely the conditions making refuge in the hospital a necessity, but in which dwells another kind of microbe, one belonging to the domain of psychology and working as an able assistant to any and all members of that virile family known as the pathogenic germ; I refer to "Ignorance."

Trained social service is a powerful weapon of the science and art of medicine. The sole excuse for our existence is "service," but the world demands service on lines of greatest efficiency. Doubting the correctness of so much reliance on the hospital system, very properly it says: Since through your discoveries in the origin of disease you know the hiding in embryo of this enemy, why expend so much force in fighting a defensive war. Shorten your sword and attack it in its dens. Organized philanthropy stands as ready to help in this work as it has stood in the past to help its hospital phase and in proportion to the results achieved will generously give aid. This is a practical world, and somehow it has a belief (subconscious it may be) that what man creates he can overcome. It is therefore ever ready not only to countenance but support any movement looking to its betterment, based on common sense. Let us commend the work already done in this connection by the out-service of the Massachusetts General Hospital, that which is being extended in connection with "Bellevue and Allied Hospitals," and others, and that of the Red Cross in connection with our mining population.

After the singing of a hymn and the benediction, the meeting adjourned.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE'S LETTER OF ADVICE TO BELLEVUE*

I WISH your association God-speed with all my heart and soul in their task of reform, and will gladly, if I can, answer any questions you may think it worth while to ask.

You say "the great difficulty will be to define the instructions, the duties, and position of the nurses in distinction from those of medical men, and you are anxious to get my views in relation to this subject."

Is this a difficulty? A nurse is not a "medical man." Nor is she a medical woman. (Most carefully do we, in our training, avoid confusion, both practically and theoretically, of letting women suppose that nursing duties and medical duties run into or overlap each other; so much so that, though we often have been asked to allow ladies intend-

* Copy of a letter written, in 1872, by Miss Nightingale to Dr. W. G. Wylie, who represented the founders of the Bellevue School, and printed originally in the report of the Committee on Hospitals of the New York State Charities Aid Association, December 23, 1872.

ing to be "Doctors" to come in as *nurses* to St. Thomas's hospital, in order to "pick up"—so they phrased it—professional medical knowledge, we have never consented even to admit such applications, in order to avoid even the semblance of encouraging such gross ignorance, and dabbling in matters of life and death, as this implies. You who *are* a "medical man," who know the difference between the professional studies of the medical student, even the idlest, and of the nurse, will readily see this.) Nurses are not "medical men." On the contrary, the nurses are there, and solely there, *to carry out the orders of the medical and surgical staff*, including, of course, the whole practice of cleanliness, fresh air, diet, etc. The whole organization of discipline to which the nurses must be subjected is for the sole purpose of enabling the nurses to carry out, intelligently and faithfully, such orders and such duties as constitute the whole practice of nursing. They are in no sense medical men. Their duties can never clash with the medical duties. Their whole training is to enable them to understand how best to carry out medical and surgical orders, including (as above) the whole art of cleanliness, ventilation, food, etc., and *the reason* why this is to be done *this* way and not *that* way.

And for this very purpose—that is, in order that they may be competent to execute medical directions—to be nurses and not doctors—they *must* be, for discipline and internal management, entirely under a woman, a *trained* superintendent, whose whole business is to see that the nursing duties are performed according to this standard. For this purpose may I say:

1. That the nursing of hospitals, including the carrying out of medical officers' orders, must be done to the satisfaction of the medical officers whose orders regarding the sick are to be carried out. And we may depend upon it that the highly trained intelligent nurse, and cultivated moral woman, will do this better than the ignorant, stupid woman, for ignorance is always headstrong.

2. That all desired changes, reprimands, etc., in the nursing and for the nurses, should be referred by medical officers *to the superintendent*.

That rules which make the matron (superintendent) and nurses responsible to the house surgeons, or medical and surgical staffs, *except* in the sense of carrying out current medical orders, above insisted on, are always found fatal to nursing discipline.

That if the medical officers have fault to find, it is bad policy for them to reprimand the nurses themselves. The medical staff must carry all considerable complaints to the matron; the current complaints, as, for instance, if a patient has been neglected, or an order mistaken, to the ward "Sister," or the head nurse, who must *always* accompany

the medical officer in his visits, receive his orders, and be responsible for their being carried out.

(All considerable complaint against a head nurse, or "Sister," to go, of course, to the matron.)

3. All discipline must be, of course, under the matron (superintendent) and ward "Sisters," otherwise nursing is impossible.

And here I should add that, unless there is, so to speak, a hierarchy of women—as thus: matron or superintendent, Sisters or head nurses, assistant or night nurses, wardmaids or scrubbers (or whatever other grades are, locally, considered more appropriate)—discipline becomes impossible.

In this hierarchy the higher grade ought always to know the duties of the lower better than the lower grade does itself. And so on to the head. Otherwise, how will they be able to *train*? "Moral influence" alone will not make a good trainer.

Any special questions which you may like to address to me I will do my best to answer as well as I am able.

But I am afraid that, without knowing your special case, I shall be only confusing if I add much more now.

I will, therefore, only now mention, as an instance, that the very day I received your first message (through Mrs. Wardroper) I received a letter from a well-known German physician, strikingly exemplifying what we have been saying as to the necessity of hospital nurses being in no way under the medical staff as to *discipline*, but under a matron or "lady superintendent" of their own, who is responsible for the carrying out of medical orders.

You are, doubtless, aware that this is by no means the custom in Germany. (In France the system much more nearly approaches to our own.) In Germany, generally, the ward nurse is *immediately*, and for everything under the ward doctor. And this led to consequences so disastrous that, going into the opposite extreme, Kaiserswerth and other German Protestant deaconesses' institutions were formed, where the chaplain and the "Vorsteherin" (female superintendent) were, virtually, masters of the hospital, which is of course absurd.

My friend, then, who has been for forty years medical officer of one of the largest hospitals in Germany, wrote to me that he had succeeded in placing a *matron* over his nurses; then, after one and a half years, she had been so persecuted that she had been compelled to resign; then, that he had remained another year trying to have her replaced; lastly that, failing, he had himself resigned his post of forty years, believing that he could do better work for his reform outside the hospital than in it.

It seems extraordinary that this first essential, *viz.*, that women should

be, in matters of discipline, under a woman, should need to be advocated at all. But so it is.

And I can add my testimony, as regards another vast hospital in Germany, to the abominable effects of nurses being directly responsible *not* to a matron, but to the economic staff and medical staff of their hospital. And I am told, on the highest authority, that since my time things have only got worse.

But I will not take up your time and my own with more general remarks, which may not prove, after all, applicable to your special case.

But I think I will venture to send you a copy of a paper—the only one I have left. The original was written by order of the (then) Poor-Law Board, for their new workhouse infirmaries, and printed in their reports. So many hospitals then wrote to me to give them a similar sketch for their special use, and it was so utterly impossible for me to write to all, that I abridged and altered my original paper for their use. And this (I fear dirty) copy is the last I have left. Pray excuse it.

Again begging you to command me, if I can be of any use for your great purpose, to which I wish every success and ever-increasing progress, pray believe me, Sir,

Ever your faithful servant,

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

P. S.—You will find in the appendix to the printed paper all the steps of our training at St. Thomas's Hospital, under our admirable matron, Mrs. Wardroper; but as she may probably see this letter, I must abstain from praising her, as it were, "to her face," which all noble natures dislike.

F. N.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

By MAE PEREGRINE

THE words that we would say in praise of her

We cannot speak, and vainly try to sing.

She blazed the trail that we are following,—

We who are privileged to minister.

The love that in her heart was wont to stir,

Love that brought comfort to the suffering,

That conquered death, or took away its sting,

Has been to us an impetus, a spur.

And so we lay our lives where hers was laid,

Upon the altar of pure sacrifice;

We would face pain and danger unafraid,

And when our way through shadowy places lies,

Would follow in the path her feet have made,

Would live a life like hers, that never dies.